

AN IMPARTIAL

ENQUIRY

Into the late

CONDUCT

OF THE

City of London,

Relating to the

EXCISE-BILL.

Address'd to the

L O R D - M A Y O R,
ALDERMEN, COMMON-COUNCIL-
M E N, and Citizens of *London*.

B Y A

Common-Council-Man of the same C I T Y.

*Let us fight them with their own Weapons. The same
Engines, which they have always made use of to raise
themselves, will, I doubt not, if rightly employ'd, even
yet be sufficient to pull them down.* Craftsman.

L O N D O N :

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An impartial Enquiry into
the late Conduct of the
City of *London*, relating
to the EXCISE-BILL, &c.


 HEN the countenance of every *Citizen* is flush'd with joy at the disappearance and abortion of the intended *Excise*, when the strange apprehensions of my *Fellow-Citizens* are quite dissipated, and nought but exultations appear amongst them, I should be wanting in duty and affection, did I not in some measure sympathize with the publick upon the success of so extraordinary and so remarkable an event.

Traffick and Merchandize afford a copious and inexhaustible fund, an eternal resource of matter for the most teeming theorist to wander in, and for the most refin'd and consummate Reasoner to descant upon: but Trade was never fix'd and establish'd by mere Speculatists; long experience and familiarity with Trade and Merchandize are equally essential with the strongest reasoning and reflection to form a just judgment of the tendency and consequence of schemes of a mercantile nature.

The opinion therefore of the trading and experienc'd world is a more certain *criterion* to judge by in matters of *Commerce*, than the most plausible projects of the greatest reasoners without the pre-requisite of experience. By the sense of the *trading-world*, I would be understood to mean that part only, in whom long experience, observation, sound reasoning and sagacity are center'd; and which qualifications are conducted by integrity, unallay'd and unbiass'd by passion or prejudice.

Where shall we look for men of these amiable accomplishments but amongst the body of *Merchants*; a body of men, generally speaking, who, by inviolable honour, affability, and every social virtue, render themselves not only the cardinal ornaments, but the very quintessence of human

man society ; and are the perpetual source of riches and plenty to every nation : they are the very eyes of the trading body, and convey the infinity of its objects into the *Exchange*, the *Sensorium* as it were, where they form the first principles of motion, which is communicated to all the exterior limbs of that vast extended constitution.

The inimitable coolness and deliberation, the nice and punctual regard to all the rules of justice, integrity and moderation, which glitter through the whole series of their mercantile conduct, will always carry the declared and united Sense of the judicious and honourable part above all suspicion of springing from any selfish or sordid views, or from any ill motive, or low groveling sinister designs of their own.

The sense of *such Merchants* is not only a rule, whereby the inferior and injudicious part of *Traders* should govern and conduct themselves, but even those who are at the helm of national affairs, will always accommodate their measures to the sense of so great and worthy a body ; so far as the circumstances and situations of the State, with respect to other classes of the Community, will admit.

When we behold all party distinctions, all private enmity and publick animosities subside, and all ranks of the mercantile
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and trading part of the people unite in one common voice and resolution against the conversion of the *Customs* on *Wine* and *Tobacco* into an Excise, we cannot but conclude such a general Aversion, such a universal Outcry against any such Alteration, to be either the genuine and natural sense of the people, or that of some crafty Agents behind the curtain, who have cast a veil over the understandings of the publick, and so by a certain magical power have set a *Spell* upon their common sense.

As I am a *Trader* in one of these Commodities intended to be excised, and must therefore be affected by the consequences of any Law that relates to that particular ; as I have contributed my utmost to avert this conversion, I am induc'd to communicate my private thoughts, and offer some reasons, not only in justification of the past conduct of my *Fellow-Citizens*, for opposing by all dutiful methods the enacting any such Law, but for their future conduct in the present situation.

The arguments against the Bill's taking Effect, drawn from the *Laws of Excise* ; from the Trader's deprivation of their right to Trials by *Juries*, repugnant to *Magna Charta*, and that augmentation of power to Ministers of State, asserted to attend the present Scheme, are of very little weight, but
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may very reasonably be dispenc'd with, when any apparent and considerable advantages thereby accrue to Trade. Arguments of this sort are common and obvious, and known to all men who have capacity to see the full force of them; are as well understood and judg'd of by the Theorist, as Practiser in Commerce.

However strong and irresistible these arguments of themselves may appear to some of our Coffee-house Politicians, they could never have produced any such united opposition; since it is impossible ever to establish any rule or maxim in society that shall at all times, and in all conjunctures, have the same good effect, unless human nature could be mathematically settled; and the numbers, humours and dispositions of the people, as well as their Trade and other circumstances always immutably the same, and not liable to the least change or fluctuation.

Nor could any apprehensions of such an increase of power to the Prerogative, in the Ebb it is now at, have produc'd any such effect. These are indeed popular Topicks, but rather affect the vulgar, than the sober and distinguishing part of the Traders. *Magna Charta*, tho' the first part of our Constitution, is now become the least part of it, having been
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alter'd in particular times, and upon particular occasions and revolutions ; and no doubt may again when the circumstances of affairs render it seasonable so to do. If be sufficient Reason against passing any Bill, because it is in some measure contrary to *Magna Charta*, the same Reason would hold equally good to repeal all Laws that have ever been made, that have alter'd or annull'd the least part of it ; which would be to open the flood-gates of Popery again, and to reinstate the Prerogative with its greatest and most extended Power.

This I take notice of only to satisfy every candid and impartial Considerer, that the general Spirit of Opposition could never arise from such sort of Arguments. For it can never be suppos'd that the Merchants and Traders would so unanimously and so vigorously oppose a Bill, merely because it was in some trifling and minute Circumstance repugnant to *Magna Charta*, when they would readily and chearfully submit to any such deviation from *Magna Charta*, in favour of any Act that they judg'd would produce some considerable Advantage to Trade in general. And to speak honestly and unprejudicedly, I have heard many ingenuous Reasoners and eminent Traders, tho' Enemies to the intended *Excise*, wish, that they could recover
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all their just debts in the same manner, and with as little trouble and expence as they can do their Goods before the *Commissioners* of the *Excise*, when they have any proper Evidence, or substantial Circumstances, to shew they were illegally seiz'd.

If then this general Ferment did not spring, and was not derived from these Arguments, it will be natural to enquire from whence it did arise, and what was the true origin of such a strange Phænomenon ; to which, without prepossession or prejudice, I would freely and ingenuously give my opinion ; viz. From the inconveniencies, that *Merchants* and *Traders* by experience find, attend *Officers* visiting their houses, shops and warehouses : Such as the laying open the great Secrets and Arcana of their Trade to those *Officers* and others ; inconveniencies too of such a nature, that the honesty of *Officers*, let the Government be never so careful of putting in men of probity and good manners, cannot relieve them in.

These I think are more natural Causes for raising such a Spirit, than what can proceed from the other species of Argument: and these Inconveniencies can never be known so well to the profoundest *Reasoner*, *Statesman* or *Politician*, as to form a just and compleat Idea of the Case, as they

are to the experienc'd Trader, who sensibly feels them.

Tho' the Sense therefore of the Trading World claims some regard from the Representatives of a trading Nation, yet every true *Citizen* must allow it is highly just and reasonable to fix upon some laudable and becoming Way whereby to express, signify, and represent this Sense to the Legislature, in the most lively and dutiful manner.

This can be done in no better way than by *Petition* in such cases as our Constitution admits of; by a *Petition* so publickly and notoriously agreed upon by the *Petitioners*, and with such evidence, marks and characteristicks of its being genuine and authentick, that the Legislature may have no room to entertain the least doubt or scruple of the *Petition's* being obtain'd by any other means than by the general and universal Consent of such a petitioning Class of Men.

When this is done, such chief *Magistrate* or *Officer* of any Corporation, whose Authority may give a Sanction to, and support the Genuineness of the *Petition*, by carrying and presenting the same to the Legislature, will undoubtedly as effectually obtain every thing aim'd at by the *Petition*, as if the whole Body of Men represented in the *Petition*, was personally present

sent before the Legislature; because no branch of the people have any right, or pretence of right to be heard in Parliament but by Petition or Council. In any Case therefore, the single Petition, presented by a chief *Magistrate* appointed for that purpose, speaks all that is allow'd to be spoke, or that can be meant, signify'd or represented by way of Petition by the whole Body, if personally present.

Tho' I heartily desir'd, and have endeavour'd all in my power to have the general Sense of the people against an intended Alteration of *Customs* into *Excises*, represented and convey'd in the strongest colours, by all legal and dutiful methods to our *Senators* and *Law-makers*; yet I can by no means agree with the late proceedings of the *City* in doing it.

I am not unappriz'd of the chief reasons offer'd and insisted upon in behalf of my *Fellow-Citizens*, in Justification of their Conduct; viz. that the *Tobacco-Bill* was not a Money-Bill; or, that if it was a Money-Bill, the *City of London* have a right to petition, and be heard by their Council on any Bill whatsoever.

Those who defend the former, observe, that the *Tobacco-Bill* was only a new modelling, and modifying an old Bill already enacted into a Law for laying *Customhouse-*

Duties on that Commodity ; and as it was not a Creation of any new *Tax* or *Duty*, but only a change or alteration of the method of collecting a *Tax* that has been many years laid, it cannot be term'd a Money-Bill.

But, if we consider that this Bill was brought in absolutely to repeal, make null and void a former Act, and for establishing another new Act in its stead, as the Title of the Bill most plainly indicates, we shall find this distinction a meer fallacy ; and no ways supportable by any species of strict and just reasoning. If the latter reason be true, that the City have a right to petition, and be heard by Council against any Bill, an Enquiry into the former is needless and impertinent. But whether the City of *London* have that unlimited power to petition the Parliament in all cases, is a point disputable amongst the greatest Lawyers. However, for argument sake, I shall take it for granted they had such a right.

But, as I before observ'd, that Right cannot be imagin'd to be further extended than to offer a petition by their chief *Magistrates*, and to be heard by Council: that is, by Council of such Learning, Repute and Integrity, as the House of Commons shall think worthy to be admitted to their honourable Bar. The *Citizens* however can
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claim no Right to be present in the House at any Debate whatsoever : nor did I ever hear they have at any time pretended to any Privilege of that sort. If so ; then all numerous Assemblies of *Citizens* about the Parliament, when any Bill is in Debate, are not only needless, but destructive of good Order, and consequently contrary to Law ; a high Indignity offer'd to Parliament, and a Breach of the Privileges of that august Assembly ; which the good Oeconomy of the whole Community requires to be most sacredly and inviolably maintain'd and preserved.

Should it be objected, that the Meeting of that number of Men, to oppose an *Excise* on *Tobacco*, about the Parliament-House, was only intended to represent the great Zeal and more strong and lively Sense of the *Merchants* and superior Ranks of *Traders* against such a Scheme : should this be objected, I say, I think it may very justly be reply'd, *That* could not in the reason and nature of things be presum'd ; because whatever the extraordinary Zeal, lively Sense, and great Concern of the City might be upon such an Occasion, our Language affords words and phrases fully significant, energic and pathetick to exhibit them ; and the Sense of any Body of *Petitioners* whatsoever can never any other-
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wise appear to the Legislature, than by the express Words and Terms of the Petition ; in which, to shew their great Unanimity in Sentiment, every individual *Citizen* may subscribe his name ; and then the Sense of the people would be as strongly represented in a petitionary light, as the voice of the whole City assembled could be.

Whenever therefore the City is unanimously averse to the enacting any peculiar Law ; and it is judg'd expedient to represent their unanimity in its full force to the Legislative Power, this method of subscription to their Petition by every Citizen answers all the Intents and Purposes of the same Subscribers ; and in as strong a manner, as if they had been all present to declare their Concurrence with their Petition *viva voce*. I may here venture to lay it down as a general Maxim, that will scarce be controverted by any one, *viz.* that all extraordinary publick Assemblies for the obtaining or accomplishing any End of a publick nature, where the same End may be obtained by less popular Methods, are contrary to all Law and Reason ; tend to the destruction of good order and civil obedience, and are introductory of anarchy and confusion in every State, where such practices are countenanc'd or encourag'd.

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By Men who will dare to think for themselves, in spite of popular Clamour and Prejudice, what I have said is full sufficient to shew that the late Concourse of People at *Westminster* could not proceed, or at least ought not to have proceeded, from any apprehensions that they could the better in a petitionary way communicate the Sentiments of the City to the Legislature.

And if I should be asked to account for the real Motive of such an extraordinary Step in the Conduct of such a Body of Men, I must confess I should be something at a loss to find any other way of accounting for it, than that it was done purposely and designedly to menace the Parliament ; and to set themselves *in terrorem* before the Face of the Legislature : Nay, it is certain and indisputable, that this, and this only was the prevailing motive of their assembling in such a manner.

If in Alleviation of this Censure, it should be alledg'd, that the *Merchants* and eminent *Traders* only attended without Swords or Sticks, with directions to keep good order, and appear with all due Submission and Humility ; it must be observ'd, that this Argument is of no force or excuse to any of the greatest and most eminent *Citizens* ; because they cannot be presum'd ignorant

ignorant that the meeting of the *Magistrates, Officers, and principal Citizens* together in Cavalcade, in so popular, pompous and publick a manner, tho' under all the injunctions to order and decency, would be attended with all the tumults and insults which ensued. And more especially so after such publick notice; and to say no worse, after an invitation of all degrees, ranks and conditions of People to accompany them, they could not but be thoroughly sensible that where-ever they went on such a publick occasion, there the headstrong and ungovernable Rabble, and the tumultuous and disorderly Multitude would ever be; who are brutishly stupid and insensible of all order, decency and humanity, and commit fearlessly the most violent outrages, the most shocking irregularities, just as the impetuous Tide of Clamour, Noise and Nonsense overflows the weak understandings of some of their Superiors.

If I should attempt to put the finest and most artful gloss, (as I would say all that I am able in their vindication) and give the softest and most good-natur'd turn to the late City Cavalcade and Appearance of *Merchants and Traders*; should I ascribe it to their racking and pungent anxiety and concern for the Success of the Bill depending; I fear such a slight cobweb Extenuation

tion would be entirely destroy'd by our Adversaries, considering the publick notice, or rather regular summons that was given to their Procession. And indeed what would take away the whole weight of any thing I could say in their behalf, would be, the Observations which I have often heard made, that such numbers of *Citizens* were employ'd and made it their Business to excite and spirit up the whole City to appear vigorous and resolute to make head upon such an occasion, that the Scheme seems contriv'd by a City Cabinet-Council, designedly, knowingly and wittingly to raise a mob-tempest. Every *Change-Alley Sharper*, every *Tobacconist's Shop-sweeper*, and all their *Porters* and *Carmen*, as soon as they were turn'd of *Temple-Bar*, commenc'd *Merchants pro tempore*. These eminent *Gentlemen* drew their Fellow Sots and Companions with them, they their inferiors after them, and so from one degree to another, till at length numbers of outrageous and ungovernable People flock'd together about the Parliament-House, and very sociably incorporated themselves with the *modest multitude*.

And indeed it is impossible in so great, splendid and populous a *Metropolis* as *London* is, that any great Body of *Merchants* and *Traders* should, in so publick and remarkable a manner, assemble together on

any occasion, especially when the same is foreknown to the whole City, but the rude, sottish, hair-brain'd Multitude will follow, and by their mixing will make a Tumult ; or at least Tumults, Riots and Disorders will always be inseparable Attendants of such Meetings of the *Magistrates*, *Merchants* and *Traders* of so great a City.

I need not dwell upon the temper, inclinations and bias of the Rabble, nor on the uses that may, and have been made of them upon certain Emergencies and critical Conjunctions. We have the happiness of having those Niceties sufficiently understood by those whose Duty it is to suppress and discourage them. I cannot entertain that Suspicion which many do, that the Tippling and Drunkenness the Mob were drawn into, (who are fit Instruments for executing any Insults, or offering any Indignities to the *Members* of the *House of Commons*) was owing to any private management, directions or connivance of the Body of *Merchants* and good *Citizens* in general ; but yet it is most certain they have many very wicked, disaffected and mob-spiriting Members amongst them ; nor is it less certain that such practices were secretly and craftily made use of to enrage, inflame and intoxicate those turbulent and mutinous Creatures.

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These Considerations indeed leave me without all scruple that this magnificent *Cavalcade* was made somewhat repugnant to (I had like to have said directly contrary to) the Rules of Duty and civil Obedience; and quite inconsistent with, and destructive of that sacred Awe and Authority requisite to be upheld and supported towards the Legislature. It is an allow'd, and will ever remain an eternal and immutable Maxim, in judging of Offences, not only in Courts of Law, but in every other equitable method of determination, that, when any person or persons premeditatedly engage in any unlawful Act (tho' the Act it self may be no otherwise ill, than as it is unlawful) they are always responsible for the consequences that may attend it, even though unforeseen or unintended by the principal Agent. This ugly knotty Maxim in judging of Mens Conduct, having the authority of the greatest Judges and ablest Reasoners on the order of Society to support it, leaves me in an odd and unlucky *dilemma*; which I really confess my self not able cleverly to get over.

If I insist that the *Mobbing, Rioting, Insults* and *Indignities* consequent upon the grand *Cavalcade*, were unthought of; or unintended by the *Supplicants*; and that they meant only to petition in an humble, loyal

and dutiful manner, it will bring upon these brave *Conductors* of the *Cavalcade* such an imputation of Ignorance in human Events; such an egregious Inadvertency and Imprudence, as cannot be well reconcileable with the Stations they bear; and proves them defective in judgment, ignorant of the effects of what they had undertaken, and too rash and precipitate in their Resolutions: this I am afraid would open to our Enemies a large field for Satire, Invektive and Calumny.

Yet, if I insist on the sagacity and penetration of those *Leaders* and *Pilots*, and peremptorily affirm it un-supposable that they could be so incogitant, so defective in the principles of common prudence and foresight: If, I say, this, on the other hand, be insisted on, we must then inevitably expose our selves to the rancour of our Malignants; who then will readily ascribe the whole to a deliberate, wilful and designed Menace and Outrage to the Parliament, and an intrepid Resolution to support a cause *vi & armis*; which we thought unsafe, and doubtful under the Banner of fair and impartial Reasoning. This being the unlucky State we are drove to, *utrum horum major accipe*. I am inclined, out of Affection to my Fellow-Citizens, of the two Evils to fasten upon the
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the first, which seems the least ; were it not for the crabbed Objections, which I fear our Adversaries will plague and harras us with.

For, They will tell us, I doubt not, that the manner of our immediate demonstrations of joy on our success in this remarkable deliverance, did not so exactly quadrate and harmonize with that grateful and discreet behaviour, which was suitable to the success and gratification of humble *Suitors* and *Petitioners*.

For these surly *Gentlemen* will say, that the setting forth *great Guns*, *Blunderbusses*, and other *Machines* of Violence, the former against the Church, even the *Mother-Church* too, and the latter against the State, a playing in their order, are more agreeable to publick exultations on some victory obtain'd by arms against the Legislature, than a congratulatory rejoicing in honour of those *Benefactors*, who in compliance to our *Petition* gave up, and set aside every thing of a strict and impartial examination into the Merits of the Bill, merely to gratify and indulge us in our desire.

These ill-natur'd Creatures may be apt to say likewise, that after so long a cessation from *Mobbing*, &c. it is impossible suddenly to raise so precaution'd and furious a *Mob* as succeeded our *Petition* ; and that it
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can never be imagin'd that such an impetuous Gang should so preservatively conduct themselves without the directions of some *powerful Men, who well understood that kind of discipline*, and were the latent Promoters and Conductors of those ripen'd *Desperadoes*.

There's another difficulty too, which I am conscious I shall not be able handsomly to get over, that arises from urging our humble, decent and petitionary views only. The Loss of Trade, the Poverty and Distress of our Traders, and such sort of Topicks, which have been so violently insisted upon by some Writers; (and which in many Cases have been found so useful) will in a great measure fall to the ground, by reason of that long Train of mercantile Grandeur and Magnificence extended, as has been unhappily confess'd by my Brother *Danvers*, from *Guildhall* to *Westminster*. Nor will our snarling Enemies forget to make a handle of that rage and fury, that reproach and obloquy, that was immediately afterwards bestow'd on every individual Member, withot distinction, that spoke in behalf of the Bill, in the place where a just discharge of their Duty called for such behaviour, and such arguments as their reason and conscience dictated to them: I say, such head-strong and infatuated

fatuated conduct, we shall be told, was far from exhibiting that Spirit of humility, remonstrating, or petitioning.

Besides, the *Ministers*, who first set this Scheme on foot, may make use of this argument in their favour; even if they should acknowledge themselves mistaken in the nature and tendency of the Scheme. For as the inconveniency of an *Excise*, occasion'd by the constant inspection and visits of *Excisemen*, are only perfectly known to us *Traders*, they could not duly weigh them in their private considerations and resolutions: But when by experience, from the Sense of the People, they found they were more gauling than they ever apprehended them to be; if upon this Sense of the trading World, they gave up the *Scheme*, they stand fairly and honourably acquitted of all imputation of designing any injury or oppression by it.

And here, truth compels me to grant, as it is what cannot be contradicted, that it is the Duty of every *Minister* of State, who must be suppos'd first to be sensible of the *Frauds*, which are detected in the method of collecting the *publick Revenue*, to lay the same before the *Legislature*, with such rational Schemes for a Law to prevent them, as to him may appear most reasonable, for their discussion and deliberation.

Was not this allow'd and encourag'd by *Princes* and *Parliaments*, we should never be able to know the defects of any Law in force relating to the *publick Revenue* ; and consequently could not be able to supply them. If this be granted, as I flatter myself no Man of Sense will contest it, then every *Minister* of State, who offers such a *Scheme*, tho' it meets with the disapprobation of the Legislature, is entitled to the highest Regard, and most honourable Treatment ; and his Scheme in right reason ought to be calmly and dispassionately examin'd into, as it is a duty incumbent on him by virtue of his office to lay such designs before the *Parliament*, and to support them with such Arguments as induc'd him to propose them. And indeed, I cannot help observing, with all deference and regard to my *Fellow-Citizens*, that it is very ill-becoming good and loyal Subjects to charge the *Ministers* of their *Prince* in a particular manner, with Intentions of destroying our Liberties ; since it must never be forgot, that these several *Members* of *Parliament* and worthy *Patriots*, (whose character and conduct thro' every Scene of Life, set them above all suspicion of acting from any private or fordid views) who vindicated and approv'd the Scheme, render it so far from being insupportable by
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strong reason and good argument, that I must confess, were it not for these inconveniencies of *Officers*, (which as I never knew them, the more I dread them) no *fair* and *upright Trader* could, in honour and conscience have oppos'd it.

And as the reasons, for opposing this Bill, arise from such incumbrances on Trade, with which the *Ministry*, cannot, and the *Trader* only can be perfectly acquainted ; so if the *Bill* be reasonable, and justifiable so far as *Ministers* may be suppos'd to be compleat Judges, then the *Ministry* in all Justice and Equity must stand acquitted of any odious imputation. When *Ministers*, in cases of this nature, are govern'd by our accounts of things, in which we our selves profess to be the only proper Judges, we must generously acknowledge, that we have receiv'd great favours and honours at their hands ; and thereby a *Ministry* display the highest regard to the *trading World*, and merit their most grateful acknowledgments and applauses. This, by every moderate and unbiass'd Thinker, must be allow'd no deceitful or fallacious way of reasoning, but such which every honest mind may obviously discern to be just and unexceptionable.

If we should insist that we had only *suppliant* and *petitionary* views, in resorting
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to *Parliament*, our Enemies will certainly lay hold of this concession ; and shew that our subsequent conduct in reviling the *Ministry* has been barefacedly inconsistent with that way of reasoning ; and so we must necessarily bring our selves under the odium and infamy of base ingratitude.

I am sensible that it has been an antient and establish'd doctrine in politicks, that *Prime Ministers* and *Privy-Counsellors* should ever be above the *reach* of popular fury, and furnish'd with Awe and Authority to repulse the impetuous torrent of vulgar enthusiasm. If indeed supreme *Magistrates* were not arm'd and fortify'd with such authority, understanding, and commanding knowledge in the affairs of common politicks, they would soon become useless ; and such who were well accomplish'd and disciplin'd in the Pilotage of *Mobs* and *Multitudes*, and could artfully swim uppermost with the boisterous and ungovernable torrent of vulgar affections, would become the greatest Men, fittest to discover the current, and to ride upon the Top-mast of the State, toss'd by every wind and wave of the Multitude, without any determinate steady rule to direct and preserve it.

Investing *Ministers* therefore with such Authority from their *Prince*, and treating them with that decency, esteem and veneration,

ration, that may encourage the greatest, most virtuous and able Men to undertake such anxious, laborious and important offices of State, was formerly thought good policy ; because such behaviour render'd *Majesty* more sacred and awful, and the People less liable to Insurrections and civil Commotions. But I shall drop this vein of reasoning, lest I should clash with and impugn the Animadversions of our renown'd Advocate Esquire *Danvers*, the City Liberty-Crier. For that Gentleman tells us, that our behaviour upon this occasion has wiped off that invidious reflection of Monsieur *Voltaire*, who says, in his History of the late King of *Sweden* ; that the present *English* are no more like the *English* in the days of CROMWELL, than the Monks and Prelates of ROME are like the antient SCIPIO'S.

To vindicate my *Fellow-Citizens* from such gross and scurrilous aspersions and contumelies, from such scandalous reproaches and ignominies, I shall furnish them, and my Fellow-Labourer *Danvers*, with a few pretty remarkable hints, to illustrate and corroborate that Author's observation : such hints, as I am apt to imagine, will apparently evince that the *English* have still not a little of the Spirit of our Ancestors in the days of *Cromwel*.

Cromwel himself, it is remarkable, was raised by well understanding the Spring of the Multitude, succeeded more by dint of Cant and fictitious Zeal for publick Liberty and publick Good than any of his opposers, tho' of infinitely greater abilities, honour and integrity, could by the strongest reason, truest policy, and acts of the most disinterested *Patriotism*. He could prescribe to the Multitude so as to make them drunk with the *Spirits* of Liberty, and so intoxicate and infatuate them, with the name, that they would never be satisfy'd till they had the unbounded Liberty to pull down all Government and Order both in *Church* and *State*; and 'tis the opinion of most People, that our own Age has produc'd as designing a dissembler of Patriotism, which he would readily shew, if he could once bring things into the same confusion that *Oliver* found them.

When that Spirit first took birth, which in the *Usurper's* time grew to its full ripeness and maturity, did not the *City* of *London* petition the Legislature? Did not a factious multitude of Citizens crowd about the House of Commons, and insult those worthy *Members*, who had the true Interest of their *King* and *Country* only at heart? Have not many of the *City* of *London* attempted the same, and have they not flock'd

flock'd in great multitudes to the doors of the Senate ; and to use my Fellow-Labourer Mr. *Danvers's* words, have they not made a brave stand there ?

Did not every concession of Parliament at the time I am speaking of, only pave the way to a fresh Petition ? But, insatiable in their demands, the more was granted, the more was solicited for. In like manner, has not the dropping of the *Excise-Bills* upon *Wine* and *Tobacco*, merely in compliance to the *Citizens*, brought forth another monstrous Petition from the *Citizens*, relating to *Coffee* and *Tea* ? Did not the Liberty-Party, after that unfortunate *King* had offer'd all Satisfaction for that ill Conduct he was charg'd with by them, daily petition and advise his *Majesty* to give up his *Counsellors*, and his *Prerogative* into their hands, that he thereby might become a great and a glorious *Prince* ? And has not a head-strong factious Party for some years past prescrib'd the very same doctrine to his present sacred Majesty, whose Princely Conduct and Regard for the just liberties of the Subject calls for as great applause, as any part of the others could censure ? And have they not done this from the same pretended zeal for the liberties of the People ? Did not the same *Cromwellian* Party continually expose, ridicule and condemn

temn every thing they could come at, which pass'd at the Council-Board, or coin'd something they would have had said, and propagated it amongst the Commonalty, who treated it with the greatest Sarcastm and Disdain that Wit and Malice could invent, to lessen that high Reverence and sacred regard due to *Majesty*?

And do not our present modern *Patriots* do the same now, do not my *Fellow-Citizens*, and many of my *Fellow Common-Council-Men* at publick *Coffee-Houses* and *Taverns* do the same? Do they not talk without reserve, of every Passage, which they presume to say pass'd between the *King* and his *Privy-Council*, the very next Morning after, and give it every splenetick and malignant turn, to the disadvantage of his *Majesty* and *Ministry*.

Tho' I have a much greater and more exalted opinion of the Secrecy of his *Majesty's Privy-Council*, than to believe what any *Common-Council-Man* of our *City* says of their private conferences; yet this will be construed, at least, as a sufficient Testimony what some of that invidious Body wish'd to have been true.

These remarks pretty well support Mr. *Danvers's* Observations, that the *Cromwellian* Spirit prevails amongst us, and renders it less surprizing, that *Liberty*, *Property*, *bad Councils*, *Prerogative*, *Taxes*, *Loss of Trade*, &c. should

should be made the common-place Topicks to lead, captivate and confound the ductile multitude to any dislike of his gracious *Majesty* and his envied *Ministry*.

There is a further Argument still that the *City-Calumniators* may make use of against ascribing our Success to the Petition only ; for thereby we shall be compell'd to contradict our Fellow-Labourer and Partizan the *Craftsman* ; for he takes occasion to say, that a certain *Ministerial Writer*, before the declension of the *Excise-Bill*, had declar'd, that he would date the fall of the *Ministry* from the time that they were bullied out of their reason ; which my friend *Caleb* says is a fine opportunity of triumphing over his *Patron* : which fully implies, from Mr. *Danvers's* own words, that the *Ministry* and *Parliament*, instead of being reason'd out of the *Excise-Bill*, have, by the *Citizens* of *London*, and those whose private Interest it was that it should not take effect, been nothing less than merely bullied and terrified out of it.

I shall now make a few slight remarks upon the other part of the *Dilemma*. And let us suppose, for once, that the Body of *Citizens*, so assembled themselves to shew their dismal apprehensions of the impending Storm against their *Trade*, and set themselves in array before the face of the Legislature, merely as *Scare-crows*. This is indeed undutiful,
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if not bordering upon something worse: But however, that may be alleviated by the trite maxim of *necessitas non habet legem*. Besides, we have a most excellent Authority for our justification from our great and indefatigable Advocate the Author of the *final Answer*; who, in his wonderful Apology for turning *Rebel*, tells us; that where Men are injur'd, or only imagine themselves to be so, it is but natural to seek redress in any manner within the tether of their abilities: If to that end Men take up arms against their *King* and *Country*, it cannot be suppos'd, that such wickedness is intended against the collective Body of the People, but against those only, who they conceive to be their chief *Injurers*. I hope the Authority of so celebrated a *Patriot*, so distinguish'd for his zeal for Liberty, and so sincere a friend to his Country, will surely be sufficient for our justification, and will skreen us from every kind of unhandsome imputation. For if it be true that Men entring into foreign Service against their *King* and *Country*, in favour of a *Popish Pretender*, cannot be intended to take up arms against the collective Body of the People, but only against particular Persons, by whom they apprehended themselves to be injur'd; sure such an Association of *Citizens*, without the participation of any foreign power or assistance; such a
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rendezvous of *Merchants* and *Traders* at the entrance of the Senate, attended with no other consequences than obstructing and assaulting some few of the *Members* only, can never be thought any affront or indignity offer'd to the whole Body of the Legislature, but to those *Members* only, whom we barely imagin'd to intend us an injury: and the rather so, because the same persons, who were the pretended objects of that *Rebel's* revenge, are the very persons who now presume to attempt, as we say, the discouragement of *Fraud*, and making a grievous encroachment upon those invaluable properties of an *Englishman*, SMOAKING and SOTTING. For us *Citizens* therefore not to concur with so worthy a Friend, so renowned a *Hero*, in opposing those very Persons, by whom we both think our selves injur'd, would be to display some Symptoms of the flagitious sin of ingratitude.

And if we should think it most eligible to grant that the consequences of the assembling were foreseen, expected, and intended by the leading *Citizens*; yet they may plead ignorance in point of Law, without giving up any part of that Character tack'd to their great and eminent Stations. For we are all suppos'd only *Traders* and *Dealers* amongst the various Classes of the labouring and trading World; and tho', as I have before said, we cannot plead ignorance of the *Facts*, which

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must always be consequent upon such a grand meeting of *Merchants*; nor pretend to say we did not foresee the *Members* would be insulted, without lessening our reputations and understandings as *Citizens*, and especially those who are *Magistrates*; yet with security to our Characters, we may plead ignorance of the Law; that the insult of some few *Members* only, was a breach of the privilege of the whole House.

This profound way of reasoning too, will help us to shift off the guilt from the collective Body of *Citizens*, and enables us to saddle it upon those only, who promoted it; and from whose Stations and Characters they may well be presum'd to have a prescience not only of the Facts that would inevitably follow such a concourse of People, but also how far those Facts were Offences.

Who those Men were that directed and promoted such Conduct, will be difficult for me to point out; nor would I be thought to give the least hint or innuendo that any Member of the honourable H——s of C——s should, to serve a present turn, first excite so large a Body of *Citizens* to do an Act, which he himself immediately afterwards voted a breach of privilege. But if there should be any such, I cannot forbear observing, that it is but a very base, poor and ignoble test of his true *Patriotism*, or regard to the liberties of us *Citizens*; for
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in some other Reigns such conduct might have contributed to deprive the City wholly of their antient Rights and Immunities. This will give my *Fellow-Citizens* sufficient reason to believe that the perpetual Hurricanes and Tempests for publick Liberty and publick Good, that so violently agitate the breasts of these Liberty-Enthusiasts, are merely artificial; and more calculated for their private interest, and affected popularity, than from any good to our *Trade* and *Prosperity*.

Whoever laid the first foundation for this late City-Prodigy, is best known to our greatest *Citizens*, and present *Magistrates*; and if they can prove any M——r to be hatching and promoting the *Cavalcade*, then it is evident and unquestionable, that such M——rs and their Tribe of *Emissaries* and *Coadjutors* ought in reason to answer for all the consequences; and the breach of privilege is chargeable on the first-rate Agents, and not upon the bulk of my *Fellow-Citizens*. And this I think I may very safely venture to say in behalf of the City, without the imputation of any design of flattery or adulation; *viz.* that the hardest and severest thing that can be said of them, is, that they were *præscientes facti, non juris*.

From these plain and natural Observations, I think it fully appears, that my *Fellow-Citizens* have been in no ways culpable in

their conduct on this memorable occasion. If they did not foresee the insults that were offer'd, it only brands the chief *Magistrates* with some marks of weakness and precipitancy ; if they did foresee them, yet as their Stations don't suppose them *Lawyers*, and to know the consequences of the fact, they are in a better case ; because their capacities and understandings are in no ways impeach'd ; so that the guilt will rest on those only whose Stations presume them knowing, not only of the Facts consequential to such extraordinary and unusual meetings, but of the effects of these facts in point of Privilege also : From whence I may very justly conclude, that I have very fully vindicated my *Fellow-Citizens* from all that train of Aspersions and Calumnies that have invidiously been cast upon their excellent Conduct.

Before I throw aside my Pen, I cannot forbear making a remark upon the turn and complection of the trading World, with regard to political controversies and disquisitions in general.

The Body of the People, who subsist upon Trade and Industry, being in the general, incapable of discerning real danger at a distance, unable from their own abilities to judge of political Power, Schemes and Projects, are naturally quick to resentment, and easily work'd upon and irritated into a
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Spirit of opposition: For as their bread, and the welfare of their whole families depend upon Trade and Industry, so whenever they are decoy'd by false colours into a belief that the fruits of their labour and industry are in danger, no Men are more ready to take fire, and to burn with the most vehement rage and inveteracy, being agitated thereto from the grand and prevailing principle of self-preservation. They not being able of themselves to discern danger at a distance, are over credulous of every idle Story, of every romantick *Writer* and *Prater*, that shall divert them with any thing that agrees with their common subjects of Conversation; as the badness of Trade, the wickedness of the Age, the villany of all *Government* and *Governors*, the frauds of this great Man, and the tricks and chicaneries of the other. And this incessant method of writing and talking operates so strongly upon their minds, who have neither leisure nor capacity to examine things to the bottom, till at length it precipitates them into the most violent and fatal extremes.

How easy therefore is it for a strong and united faction of Men of parts, learning, artifice and insinuation, so to captivate and cajole the bulk of the trading People, when for their own private views and designs they find it necessary to delude and trepan them?

them? *History*, it is true, affords us too many instances of Men in high Stations, armed with power and authority, who have frequently abus'd the high trusts reposed in them ; but the more of these examples appear in the *Records* of Antiquity, the more valuable it renders every such *Minister*, who makes no ill use of his power.

All Men, even the meanest and most despicable Subject under any accusation, is, by all Law and Reason, judg'd innocent till the contrary appears. Why then should not *Ministers* of State be as justly and humanely judg'd of as common Criminals? Riches and Power in the hands of ambitious *Ministers* have frequently indeed excited Men to enlarge them illegally ; but then it must be observ'd, that these passions and weaknesses are not only peculiar to *Ministers* of State, but common to all Men, and to all Societies and Communities of Men under Heaven. The same *Histories*, which abound with instances of *Ministers*, who, by their great riches and affluence, have become tyrannical, furnish us likewise with instances of great *Cities* and *Communities* of Men, who, by their great and extended Riches, derived to them from a long series of peace, plenty and prosperity, have become insolent to their *Prince*, and disobedient to the Laws of their Country.

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But let us, my *Fellow-Citizens*, never bring our selves under such imputations ; let us be upon our guard, not to be mislead and impos'd upon by any *Faction*, who think to sport themselves with the strong passions and weak judgments of the trading part of the Nation : let us think for our selves, with our own understandings ; let us see with our own eyes, and not with the eyes of those whose interest it is to deceive us.

What unnatural outcries and lamentations have we been stunn'd with, upon the decay and loss of Trade to this grand Metropolis ? What declamatory fustian harangues have we been amus'd with upon the prosperity of other Nations, and poverty of our own ? And what uses have designing Men made of those popular and noisy Topicks ? But if we will dare to judge for our selves, use our own eyes, and our own understandings, what symptoms do we find of these calamities ? If the great augmentation of our *Exports* and *Imports*, and the Excess of the former be one, then indeed our *Trade* is declining : If the great extent, splendor, and magnificence of our *Buildings*, the *increase of our inhabitants*, the growing appearance among the trading part of our Nation, in *Coaches*, *Houses* and *Furniture* ; and every other Species of opulence and prosperity, be signs of the decay of Trade and Poverty of
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our *Merchants*, then are we poor indeed : If the daily Concourse of *Foreigners* from all parts of *Europe* to reside, and be naturaliz'd amongst us, be an indication of our own Poverty, and of the Grandeur of other Nations, then we must be a needy and a beggarly Nation beyond dispute.

The same exclamations have been made upon the loss of Liberty ; but if *Englishmen* will be *Englishmen*, and not suffer themselves to be worm'd out of their common Sense ; if they will think for themselves, and swallow no such political Creeds, as some Men would gladly cram down their throats, they will soon be convinc'd that all cries about the loss of Liberty are equally fallacious with those of the loss of Trade ; they will find, upon a fair and impartial examination, that *England* never enjoy'd so great a share of Liberty, Wealth nor Learning, as she does under the present Administration.

F I N I S.

